

**A Patent Application of
Priti Srivastava
for
a Headband**

Cross-reference to Related Applications

A design patent application, serial number 29/167,956 for this invention was filed on 09/24/2002 for inventor Priti Srivastava. The benefit of the filing date of 09/24/2002 is requested for the current patent application with the term of the current application being reduced accordingly.

Background of the Invention

This invention relates to an improved headband particularly one that can be worn simultaneously as a headwrap and a ponytail retainer. The headband of this invention has several advantages over existing prior art devices that are described in the following paragraphs.

In US Patent 5,598,585 inventor Stroup describes a headband that can be used to include a ponytail. Stroup's headband consists of an elongated member with Velcro closures. This design of Stroup's headband is likely to make it expensive to manufacture. More importantly Stroup's headband will be hard to use because of its linear design. Just as it is easier to secure a ponytail with a circle of elastic than with an elongated string of elastic, likewise it is easier to wear a circular headband as compared to an open-ended headband such as Stroup's.

US Patent 5,590,422 by Henderson describes a headband and hair-retainer where the hair-retaining device is made of a rigid material. Such a rigid material will most likely be uncomfortable for the wearer especially when she is leaning against a back rest or lying down. Additionally, the design of Henderson's device lacks the simplicity and finesse of the headband of the current invention.

In US Patent D443,954 inventors Blum et al describe a combined headband and hair retainer. Their hair retainer has the disadvantage that it bunches up the wearer's hair into a small bundle

thereby forming a kink at the point of constriction. Additionally, Blum et al's hair retainer appears contrived and does not have the simplicity and elegance of the device of the current invention.

Thus, it is the object of this invention to provide a combined headband and hair retainer that is easy and inexpensive to manufacture.

It is also the object of this invention to provide a combination headband and hair retainer that is easy to use.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a headband that is attractive in appearance.

It is yet another object of this invention to provide a headband that can be used as a cosmetic wrap to keep the wearer's hair out of her face while washing or applying cosmetics.

An additional object of this invention is to provide a headband that can be used as an ear warmer as well as a ponytail retainer and headband.

A further object of this invention is to provide a device that can be worn around the neck of the wearer in place of a scarf or a muffler. The slit in the device can be used to gently retain the wearer's hair thus making it the ideal accessory for winter sports such as skating or skiing.

A still further object of this invention is to provide a compact hair accessory that can easily be packed into a ladies purse.

Yet another object of this invention is to provide an aesthetic hair accessory that can be also be used in the manner of an ordinary headband when the slit is discretely hidden under the hair of the wearer.

Other and still further objects, features and advantages of the headband will become obvious from a reading of the following detailed description of the present invention, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

Brief Summary of the Invention

The present invention provides a combined headband and ponytail retainer. Methods for using such a device are also included.

In its simplest embodiment the device of the current invention consists of a cylindrical band of material that includes an elongated slit along a portion of its circumference. The slit acts as a ponytail pull-through. The design of the current invention presents several advantages.

The headband of the current invention can be used in the manner of an ordinary, everyday head wrap. Then, when desired, the ponytail can be pulled through the slit for a new and convenient hairstyle.

The headband of this invention can be used as a cosmetic wrap for keeping the wearer's hair out of her face while washing or applying cosmetics. However, depending on the material of construction it can also be used as a stylish hair accessory.

The split headband of this invention can be an ideal cold weather accessory. It can be used as a neck warmer or ear warmer while also being used as a hair retainer.

The simple and intuitive design of the headband will allow for easy commercial introduction since there will be no learning curve for the user. A simple illustration of the headband in use will show the user all he or she needs to know about using the headband.

The headband is very compact and can be easily carried in a purse without adding either bulk or weight. It can easily be packed for travel.

The headband is a great gift item for anyone with medium to long hair.

Thus the headband of this invention has great potential for market success.

Brief Description of the Several View of the Drawing

Fig 1 shows a perspective view of the first embodiment of the headband of this invention.

Fig 2 shows the first embodiment of the headband of this invention as worn by a user.

Fig 3 shows a front elevational view of the first embodiment of the headband of this invention.

Fig 4 shows the headband of this invention being used as an ear warmer.

Fig 5 shows the headband of this invention being used as a neck warmer.

Fig 6 shows how the slit in the headband may be used as a decorative element.

Fig 7 shows a second embodiment of the headband of this invention.

Fig 8 shows a third embodiment of the headband of this invention.

Fig 9 shows a fourth embodiment of the headband of this invention.

Reference Numerals in Drawings

1 first embodiment of the headband of this invention

2 elongated slit formed in the first embodiment of the headband

3 non-slit band region of the headband

4, 6 regions of the headband forming slit 2

8 hair of wearer

10 second embodiment of the headband of this invention

11 non-slit region of headband that goes over the crown

12 slit formed in the second embodiment of the headband of this invention

14, 16 bands of material forming slit 12

20 third embodiment of the headband of this invention

22 slit formed in the third embodiment of the headband of this invention

24, 26 regions of the headband forming slit 22

28 non-slit region of the headband that goes over the crown of the wearer's head

30 fourth embodiment of the headband of this invention

32 slit formed in the fourth embodiment of the headband of this invention

34, 36 regions of the fourth embodiment of the headband forming slit 32

Detailed Description of the Invention

Various aspects of the present invention will evolve from the following detailed description which should be taken in conjunction with the prior described drawings.

Fig 1

Fig 1 shows a perspective view of the first embodiment of this invention. Headband 1 of this invention can be seen to be substantially cylindrical in shape. The width of band 3 that forms the non-slit region of the headband can be seen to be smaller than the diameter of the band. There is an elongated slit or opening 2 in the headband. The slit can be seen to be long and narrow. However it can be made wider so that it defines an opening that is substantially square or circular in shape. In fact the shape of opening 2 can be varied without taking away from the spirit of this invention. Likewise the length of opening 2 can be varied. Care should, however, be taken so that opening 2 is big enough to allow the wearer's ponytail to be pulled through easily. At the same time, opening 2 should be small enough to hold the wearer's hair reasonably snugly. Ideally, the length of the slit should not be greater than the distance between the ears of the average wearer as measured at the back of the head. If the slit is too long, then the region 4 of the band, as seen in Fig 2, will tend to ride high up on the head thus detracting from both the look and utility of the band. The headband should ideally be made of a soft stretchable material such as that generally used for headwraps. Such a material could be a knit fabric or a stretchable piece of elastic. A piece of molded plastic such as that used in stretchable comb-like headbands may also be used. In fact, any material with enough give to function as an ordinary headband can be used for the headband of this invention.

Fig 2

Figure 2 shows the back of a wearer's head with her hair 8 pulled through opening 2 of headband 1. Hair 8 can be seen to be constrained snugly between regions 4 and 6 of the headband.

Fig 3

Fig 3 shows a front elevational view of headband 1 of this invention. Slit 2 can be seen to be flanked between regions 4 and 6 of the headband. Element 3 is the non-slit region of the headband.

Fig 4

Fig 4 shows how the headband of this invention can be used a cold weather accessory. The headband can be seen to be covering the ears of the wearer. Such an accessory would be ideal for winter sports because it will not only keep the wearer's ear warm but also double as a hair retainer. Unlike caps that tend to flatten a wearer's hairstyle and unlike ponytail elastics that tend to leave a kink in the wearer's hair, the headband will provide a gentle retainer for the wearer's hair.

Fig 5

Fig 5 shows an additional way in which the headband of this invention can be used as a cold weather accessory. When worn in this manner the headband not only warms the wearer's neck but also acts as a hair accessory by gently constraining the wearer's hair between regions 4 and 6 of the headband. For such a use, the headband could be knitted from a warm sweater-like material or it could be sewn from a fleece-like material.

The style illustrated in Fig 5 does not need to be restricted to cold-weather item. The headband made narrower and of a decorative material could be worn as a combined necklace and hair accessory. To further enhance the use of the headband as a necklace, an ornament could be attached to the front of the band. For instance, the headband could be made of a narrow elastic band or a leather cord for such a use.

Fig 6

Fig 6 shows yet another way of wearing the headband of this invention. In this use, the slit is being used as a decorative element. It is positioned at the top of the wearer's head allowing her hair at the crown to show through the slit. If desired, the user could pull her bangs or fringe

through slit 2 so that the bangs drape over region 6 of the headband. This would not only provide a distinctive style but would also prevent the bangs from getting flattened.

Fig 7

Fig 7 shows second embodiment 10 of the headband of this invention. In this embodiment, slit 12 is formed between two bands of material 14 and 16 that are attached to region 11 which is the non-slit portion of the headband. While headband 1 was made from a single band of material, headband 10 consists of separate bands of material that are sewn or otherwise attached together. In such an embodiment, band 11 can be made of a different material than bands 14 and 16. For instance, band 11 can be made of a relatively rigid material while bands 14 and 16 could be made from flexible fabric or polymeric materials.

Fig 8

Fig 8 shows third embodiment 20 of the headband of this invention. In this embodiment the slit is formed between bands of material 24 and 26 where band 26 is placed behind, and concentrically, with element 24. Element 24 is a continuation of element 28 which forms the non-slit region of headband 20. Thus a front or rear elevational view of this embodiment would not reveal a slit. But the slit would be visible in top, bottom and perspective views. One way of making this embodiment would be to start off with a standard cylindrical headband and then attach the two ends of length of material 26 along an arc of the headband.

Fig 9

Fig 9 shows fourth embodiment 30 of the headband of this invention with slit 32 formed between elements 34 and 36. This embodiment could be made from molded polymer or from covered wire or any material that can be employed for headbands and headwraps. This particular headband shows how different materials can be used to made the split headband of this invention. It also illustrates how the headband can take a variety of shapes while still retaining the essence of this invention.

Thus, aside from the different headbands and methods of wearing shown in the above figures, many others are possible by making minor adjustments to the headband. Elements of the various embodiments may be mixed and matched. For instance, element 16 of Fig 7 could be placed behind and concentrically with element 14 of Fig 7 in the manner of element 26 of Fig 8. The thickness of the band can be varied for different looks. Decorative features such as flowers or jewels could be added to the band to enhance its appearance. The band could be made from a variety of materials. For instance, it could be knit, woven or molded. It could be made to look like a bandana incorporating a hidden slit. It could be made from a puckered or smocked piece of fabric. The slit can be elongated or square or circular or any other shape. The slit may be formed by detachably attaching a band of material to a standard headband. Thus, in Fig 8, element 26 could be detachably attached to the headband. The size of the slit could be varied. The embodiment shown in Fig 5 could be made to look like a scarf or a muffler while still incorporating a slit that would allow hair to be pulled through.

Thus, modifications may be made to the headband of this invention without taking away from the spirit of the invention. All such modifications are to be regarded as within the scope of this application.

Operation of the invention

The headband of this invention is as easy to use as it is to manufacture.

For instance, to achieve the look shown in Fig 2, the wearer first pulls the headband over her head so that it is resting around her neck in the manner of a necklace, with slit 2 positioned at the back of her neck. She then pulls the front portion of the headband to the crown of her head while leaving the rear, slit portion of the headband at her neck. In other words, the wearer first wears the headband around her head as she would an ordinary headband. In fact, the headband of the current invention may be used as an ordinary headband with the slit hidden behind the wearer's hair at the nape of her neck.

Once the wearer is wearing the headband of this invention in the manner of an ordinary headband, she can then reach into the slit of the headband and pull her hair through the slit. The headbands shown in Figs 7, 8 and 9 are also worn in a similar manner. The headband shown in Fig 4 is worn similarly with the exception that the headband is pulled over the ears of the user so as to function as an ear warmer.

To achieve the look shown in Fig 5, the wearer first pulls the headband over her head all the way to her neck with the slit positioned at the back of her neck. She then reaches into the slit and pulls her hair through the slit resulting in the look of Fig 5.

In order to achieve the look shown in Fig 6, the wearer wears the headband in the manner of an ordinary headband taking care to position the slit at the crown of her head. The wearer may further pull her bangs through the slit so that they fall forward towards her forehead over region 6 of the headband.

While certain novel features and uses of this invention have been shown and described, it is not intended to be limited to the details above, since it will be understood that various omissions, modifications, substitutions and changes in the forms and details of the device illustrated and its operations can be made by those skilled in the art without departing in any way from the spirit of the present invention.

Conclusion, Ramifications, and Scope of Invention

Thus the reader will see that the headband of this invention provides a simple hair accessory for achieving a variety of stylish and practical looks. This band is an improvement over existing prior art devices because it is not only simple in construction and use but also very versatile.

One use of this headband is as a cosmetic wrap. When washing her face, a user needs to keep her hair from getting wet. If she uses an ordinary headband to keep her hair from falling forward over the forehead, then she will also need to use a ponytail elastic or some other means to keep the lower portions of her hair from falling forward. Having to use two separate hair accessories

for a simple task such as washing ones face is a nuisance. Additionally, the use of a ponytail elastic to keep her hair back can result in a kink in her hair thus ruining a fresh blow-dry. The headband of this invention offers a simple solution by not only keeping hair away from the forehead but by also gently acting as a ponytail retainer.

Other uses of the headband of this invention include its use as a cold weather accessory. It provides a good alternative to a cap especially since, unlike a cap, it does not flatten a user's hairstyle. As shown in Fig 4, the band can be used to cover the users ears while also acting as a hair accessory keeping her hair tidily but gently bundled at the nape of her neck. This would be an ideal hairstyle to wear at a skating rink for instance and for other winter sports.

The headband can also be used as a neck warmer as shown in Fig 5. A wide headband will not only keep the wearer's neck warm but also keep her hair out of her face without causing a kink in the hair as hair elastics are prone to do.

Depending on the material and construction of the headband it can be a career accessory, a school accessory as well as an accessory for dressy occasions.

From the preceding discussion, the reader will see that the headband of this invention has many advantages over prior art devices including those of ease of manufacturing, ease of use, versatility, compact structure, and aesthetic appeal.

It is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, function, and manner of operation, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention. While this description is directed to particular embodiments, it is understood that those skilled in the art may conceive modifications and/or variations to the specific embodiments shown and described herein. Any such modifications or variations which fall within the purview of this description are intended to be included as well.

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Thus even though the description above contains many specifics, these should not be construed as limitations on the scope of the invention.